

NH Department of Agriculture, Markets & Food

Division of Regulatory Services

The primary mission of the Division of Regulatory Services, as a regulatory unit of the New Hampshire Department of Agriculture, Markets and Food, is to assure compliance with New Hampshire laws and the administrative rules of the department governing the marketing of farm commodities.

PROGRAMS

Feed, Fertilizer, Liming Materials, and Horticultural Growing Media:

New Hampshire has specific laws governing commercial Feeds including Pet Foods, Commercial Fertilizers, Agricultural Liming materials, and Horticultural Growing Media. These products must be registered annually prior to distribution in the state. Products must meet label requirements intended to provide consumers with important information about the analysis, ingredients and intended uses of the product. The Division samples and tests several hundred products each year to assure compliance with label guarantees and responds to complaints from consumers.

Seed:

The New Hampshire Seed Law requires a license for seed labelers who distribute seed for planting purposes. The law requires seed packages to be labeled with information relative to germination and purity percentages. A list of weed seed species that are designated as either restricted or prohibited is established under the administrative rules of the program. Samples of seed are collected in the marketplace and tested for conformance with label guarantees. Retail inspections assure that seed is within the legal sales period.

Seal of Quality:

A voluntary program that provides superior quality standards for farm products. Producers who subscribe to the program agree to maintain high quality standards verified by periodic visits by Division inspectors. Participating producers are permitted to use the NH Seal of Quality logo design in advertising and on product packaging. The Division has developed standards for producers of Maple products, Apples, Cider, Eggs, Honey and Raspberries. Promotional materials including farm signs and stickers displaying the Seal of Quality logo design are made available to participants at cost.

Organic Certification:

The Division is an accredited certifying agent for the USDA's National Organic Program. It provides certification services to organic farms and to processors of organic products. Prospective certified producers must complete an annual application to demonstrate adherence to the program's organic production standards. On-site inspection visits are conducted with random follow-up visits to verify compliance with the rules. The Division offers promotional materials, including farm signs and stickers displaying the NHDAMF Certified Farm logo design, for use in advertising and product packaging.

Farm Products - Standards and Grades:

The Division provides inspection services for a variety of farm products produced in the state including: Apples, Cider, Eggs, Maple Products, Potatoes and Honey. State laws and rules covering each of these products specify labeling and grading requirements.

Inspections at points of production, distribution and sale are conducted to assure the quality of New Hampshire Farm products in the marketplace. Division personnel are licensed by the USDA Fruit and Vegetable Division to conduct shipping point inspections on apples destined for export. Controlled atmosphere apple storage facilities are registered and tested during the apple storage year. Through cooperative agreements with the USDA, division staff provide assistance with the implementation of certain federal programs including the Country of Origin Labeling program.

Considerable emphasis is given to maintaining the quality of Maple Syrup and Apple Cider produced in the state through educational programs, inspection and testing. Sugarhouses and cider mills are visited regularly to review for proper grading, quality and packaging safety. Products are tested for conformance to quality standards and for adulteration.

The Division also administers the state laws relative to the labeling of farm products identified as "Native" or "Local," The Native Lumber Grading and Certification program and monitors farmland enrolled in the state's Agricultural Lands Preservation Program.

Best Management Practices:

State Law under RSA 431:33 requires the department to respond to complaints involving the mismanagement of manure, agricultural compost and chemical fertilizer. The Division coordinates inspections to sites where these materials are suspected of causing environmental contamination or nuisance type problems. The Department has published and distributes a "Manual of Best Management Practices for Agriculture in New Hampshire." Complaint resolution focuses on non-punitive methods.

Agricultural Nutrient Management Grant Program:

The Division administers a grant program to assist agricultural land and livestock owners with efforts to minimize adverse effects to waters of the state by better managing agricultural nutrients including fertilizer, manure and compost. Applicants may apply for grants of up to \$2,500.

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